

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 IO-13 NEA-10 FEA-01 ACDA-12
AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00
COME-00 DLOS-09 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01
ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 JUSE-00
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-07 OMB-01 PA-01
PM-05 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /150 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7071
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 1119

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PLOS PBOR PGOV PDIP EFIS EAID SE MD SF UR RE UK FR MP
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW -- OCTOBER 21

REF: PORT LOUIS 1087

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 1118 PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF THIS CABLE. END
SUMMARY.

1. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESUMED SITTING ON OCTOBER 18. THE
SESSION LASTED ONLY 45 MINUTES. RESPONDING TO QUESTION, THE
PRIME MINISTER SAID THE SAYA DE MALHA BANK IS SITUATED PARTLY IN
MAURITIUS' ECONOMIC ZONE AND PARTLY IN ITS "HISTORIC WATERS"
WHICH HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXPLOITED BY MAURITIANS. RAMGOOLAM ALSO
SAID THAT SOVIET FISHING VESSELS HAD BEEN OBSERVED IN THESE
WATERS IN JULY AND SEPTEMBER. NO REPRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE
TO THE USSR, HE ADDED, BUT SUCH "VIOLATIONS" WILL BE DEALT WITH
UNDER THE TERMS OF THE MARITIME ZONES ACT. ASKED BY A MAURITIAN
MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) DEPUTY IF NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN STARTED
TO "RECOVER" DIEGO GARCIA, RAM RESPONDED THAT HE KNEW NOTHING
ABOUT THAT BUT HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE A RAPID SOLUTION TO THE
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PROBLEM OF THE DIEGO GARCIA WHO NOW LIVE IN MAURITIUS.

2. PAUL BERENGER, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MMM, VISITED
REUNION ON OCTOBER 13 TO DISCUSS WITH PAUL VERGES, LEADER
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF REUNION, HIS PLAN FOR A CONFERENCE
OF "PROGRESSIVE FORECES" OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TO BE HELD
IN MADAGASCAR. HE HOPES FOR A PREPARATORY MEETING IN

ANTANANARIVO ON NOVEMBER 1. HE SAID HE MAY VISIT MADAGASCAR SOON TO FINALIZE PLANS.

3. BERENGER TOLD AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (AFP) IN REUNION THAT GHE GOM HAS "STINKING" RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE REGION, AND HE SPECIFICALLY CITED THE SEYCHELLES AND MADAGASCAR. THE COALITION GOVERNMENT LOSES NO OCCASION TO ATTACK THESE NEIGHBORING GOVERNMENTS, THE MMM LEADER DECLARED. THE GOM HAS NO RELATIONS WITH OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES, HE ADDED, AND THEN ALLEGED THAT ITS RELATIONS WITH LONDON, PARIS AND WASHINGTON HAVE ALWAYS BEEN SUBSERVIENT.

4. BERENGER CONFIRMED THAT THE MANIFESTATION AGAINST PRINCESS ALEXANDRA WAS THE OPENING SALVO IN THE MMM'S CAMPAIGN FOR A REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS. WHILE IN REUNION HE ALSO TOLD AFP HIS PARTY FAVORS A REPUBLIC WITH AN INDIAN-STYLE PRESIDNET AND NOT A FRENCH-STYLE PRESIDENT. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CONSTITUTION CANNOT BE AMENDED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF MMM DEPUTIES, SINCE A THREE-QUARTERS VOTE IS NEEDED TO MAKE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES. (LE MAURICIEN OF OCTOBER 15 REPORTED THAT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE IS PREPARING A STUDY ABOUT THE VARIOUS KINDS OF REPUBLICS TO GIVE TO THE GOVERNMENT IN ANTICIPATION OF A REFERENDUM ON THIS QUESTION.)

5. THE EFFORT AGAINST THE VISIT OF PRINCESS ALEXANDRA MOUNTED BY THE MMM LAST WEEK IS DEEMED TO HAVE BEEN A FAILURE, AS ONLY CONFIDENTIAL

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ABOUT A THOUSAND MILITANTS RESPONDED TO THE PARTY'S CALL FOR A DEMONSTRATION. THE MMM-SP DEMONSTRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY DREW ONLY ABOUT 200 PARTICIPANTS, AND ONLY A DOZEN OR SO GRADUATES BOYCOTTED THE GRADUATION CEREMONY. AT A MMM RALLY LAST WEEKEND PARTY PRESIDENT JUGNAUTH CRITICIZED THOSE DEMONSTRATORS WHO HAD THROWN STONES AT PASSING AUTOMOBILES DURING THE ANTI-ALEXANDRA MAINFESTATIONS.

6. THE MMM'S LE MILITANT CONTINUED ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST FRENCH "IMPERIALISM" ON THE SUBJECT OF WHO OWNS TROMELIN ISLAND. THE PAPER'S RESEARCH SHOWED THAT TROMELIN WAS LISTED IN 1826 DOCUMENT AS A DEPENDENCY OF MAURITIUS UNDER THE NAME OF ILE DES SABLES (AND WITH THE GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES OF TROMELIN). THE PAPER ALSO FOUND PROOF THAT ON OCCASIONS IN THE PAST (IN 1901 AND DURING WORLD WAR II) THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS LEASED TROMELIN TO MAURITIAN CITIZENS TO EXPLOIT ITS GUANO DEPOSITS AND FISH RESOURCES. LE MILITANT SAYS FRANCE IS ALREADY EXPLOITING THE TOURIST POTENTIAL OF THE ISLAND AND IS PLANNING TO PRODUCE LARGE QUANTITIES OF TORTOISE MEAT THERE.

7. ON OCTOBER 19 THE MMM HELD THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF

PUBLIC RALLIES/DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT FOR ITS PROGRAMS AND POSITIONS. THE THEME OF THE FIRST WAS RACISM/APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE DEATH OF STEVEN BIKO. VORSTER WAS BURNED IN EFFIGY. ACCORDING TO THE INDEPENDENT PRESS THE RALLY DREW ONLY ABOUT 200 PERSONS AT THE START BUT GRADUALLY GREW TO A CROWD OF NEARLY 1,000. THIS RELATIVELY SMALL TURNOUT CANNOT HAVE BEEN VERY PLEASING TO THE MMM LEADERSHIP. BUT THE RALLY WAS ORDERLY AND DISCIPLINED. THE PARTY PLANS FUTURE MEETINGS INCLUDING "VISITS" TO THE EMBASSIES OF THE U.S., FRANCE AND BRITAIN OVER SUCH ISSUES AS DIEGO GARCIA AND TROMELIN.

8. THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER L'EXPRESS SPECULATED ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD A RHODESIA SETTLEMENT MIGHT
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TAKE PLACE SOON IN MAURITIUS. THIS SPECULATION WAS BASED ON SIMILAR SPECULATION IN THE LONDON PRESS, PLUS THE COINCIDENCE THAT A LONRHO CONFERENCE WAS HELD LAST WEEK ON THIS ISLAND. (LONRHO'S CHAIRMAN, TINY ROWLAND, IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN ACTIVE IN TRYING TO PUSH A RHODESIA SETTLEMENT TO PROTECT THE MULTINATIONAL'S INVESTMENTS IN THAT TERRITORY.) IN THE PAST PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM HAS OFFERED MAURITIUS AS A "NEUTRAL" SITE FOR SUCH NEGOTIATIONS.

9. ON HIS RETURN FROM A LONG TRIP ABROAD, PLANNING MINISTER GHUBURRUN ANNOUNCED THAT HE EXPECTS TO SECURE LOANS FROM FRANCE, GERMANY, BELGIUM AND JAPAN TO ADD TO CHINESE AID ALREADY ACCORDED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IN THE NORTH OF THE ISLAND. THIS NEW ASSISTANCE WILL PERMIT THE PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED BY 1980 (INSTEAD OF 1982), HE DECLARED. HE ALSO SAID THAT BELGIAN AND GERMAN INVESTORS ARE INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A PAPER MANUFACTURING PLANT HERE.

10. RAMGOOLAM WILL MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO INDIA FROM 1 TO 5 NOVEMBER, FOLLOWING WHICH HE WILL ATTEND THE USSR'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS IN MOSCOW. HE WILL RETURN TO MAURITIUS ON 11 NOVEMBER.
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